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Chairman: Mr. Tomka ..... (Slovakia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 145: United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law (A/52/524)

1. **Mr. Odoi-Anim** (Ghana), Chairman of the Advisory Committee on the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law, said that his delegation had observed the evolution of the Programme and its efforts to increase or at least maintain its budget for some, if not all, of its training programmes.

2. The Programme of Assistance played a significant role in the promotion of the rule of law, as it provided for the teaching and dissemination of international law in universities, and to government officials and the private bar. Despite its modest budget, the Programme had substantially enhanced the quality of its training activities; consequently, the number of applicants seeking to participate in its various seminars and fellowships had increased, in some instances by 100 per cent. The Programme, originally designed for developing countries, was now in demand in the developed countries as well.

3. Although it was one of the very few programmes on which the Secretary-General submitted a biennial report to the Sixth Committee, the Secretary-General consulted the Advisory Committee on an annual basis. The members of the Advisory Committee had met in 1996 and again in October 1997 in order to consider the draft report of the Secretary-General (A/52/524). The report had been reorganized so as to avoid the repetition of material presented in other documents. Particularly noteworthy was the high quality of programmes offered during the past biennium, which had led to the substantial increase in demand which he had mentioned.

4. At its meeting in October, the Advisory Committee had welcomed the proposals aimed at enhancing the Programme's efficiency and the initiative of the Secretary-General to establish a United Nations Audiovisual Library in International Law (A/52/524, para. 89 and annex). The Library would make it possible to assist States, and, in particular, developing States and their institutions of higher learning in incorporating courses on international law into their curricula and would provide training opportunities for government officials dealing with questions of international law. The project, for which no annual budget had been allocated, would be financed by voluntary contributions.

5. The Advisory Committee was concerned about the budget allocated to the Programme of Assistance, which, in 1997, had been reduced by $23,300. Several members of the Advisory Committee were of the view that that reduction was unjustified, since the Programme's budget was relatively small. It was the hope of the Advisory Committee that the Sixth Committee would take appropriate measures in that regard.

6. He introduced draft resolution A/C.6/52/L.17, which was similar to previous resolutions on the same issue. A new paragraph 7 had been included, in which the Secretary-General was requested to reconsider the programme budget for the Programme of Assistance for the next and future bienniums with a view to strengthening and enhancing the Programme. As with previous resolutions on the item, paragraph 13 urged all States and relevant international organizations, whether regional or universal, to make all possible efforts to implement the goals and carry out the activities contemplated in section IV of the programme of activities for the final term (1997-1999) of the Decade.

7. He stressed the importance of financial contributions to the Programme and the need for those States which were in a position to contribute to do so, however small the amount. Lastly, he expressed the hope that the Sixth Committee would adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

8. **Mr. Gao Feng** (China) said that, since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese Government had attached great importance to the role of international law in international relations, actively promoting exchanges with other countries on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence and other norms of international relations.

9. Since 1978, China had been pursuing a policy of reform and opening up to the outside world, striving to accelerate the establishment of democracy and the rule of law. In 1979, the first academic programme in international law had been offered at Beijing University. More than a dozen law schools and institutes in China now had their own international law department, five universities offered programmes in international law and 175 law schools offered courses in international law which were open to both law students and non-law students. Research institutions in international law had also been established in some universities. Furthermore, in view of the expansion of international economic relations and of China's trade and economic relations with other countries, an international economic law programme had been introduced in some universities. China had now formed a team of international law instructors from different age groups and had compiled

a comprehensive set of teaching materials in international law.

10. With the aim of promoting international exchanges and cooperation, his Government had sent graduate students and experts in international law from various professions abroad. At the same time, a growing number of foreign scholars and students were coming to China to study and give lectures. At the beginning of the United Nations Decade of International Law, his Government, in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other organizations, had sponsored the Seminar on Developing Countries and International Environmental Law, held on 12 August 1991. It had also successfully hosted the Seminar on Developing Countries and International Law, held from 24 to 26 August 1992.

11. Some nongovernmental research institutions and organizations in China were playing a vital role in promoting exchanges and cooperation in research in international law; they included the Chinese Society of International Law and the Chinese Society of the Law of the Sea. The activities carried out by those two institutions, either by themselves or in cooperation with government agencies, had greatly contributed to research activities in international law in China and to the diplomatic practice of the Chinese Government. He also wished to mention that, from 21 to 23 August 1995, the International Seminar on Space and Aviation Laws and their Applications had been held in Beijing. Nearly 100 experts and eminent personalities from a dozen countries and international organizations had participated in that Seminar, the success of which had given impetus to the development of international space and aviation law and had promoted understanding and cooperation in that field in academic and business communities of various countries.

12. The aforementioned activities demonstrated his country's achievements in the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law. The Government and people of China would continue to pursue that goal.

13. **Mr. Hamdan** (Lebanon) said that the seminars organized within the framework of the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law were very important, and that efforts should therefore be made to increase the number of people who benefitted from it. Information technology could be used to hold seminars simultaneously in various countries and thus to disseminate information more widely. Agreements might also be concluded with the law faculties of certain universities in order to organize teleconferences through the distance learning system. Thus, not only the participants present at the seminar, but more than 200 or 300 participants in each country could benefit from the seminar. It was also important to invite scholars from various legal systems to lecture on the topics of the seminars in order to increase interaction between the various legal systems and promote a better understanding of international law.

14. His delegation thanked the countries which had helped to finance the Programme, and hoped that the number of countries which made voluntary contributions to its activities would continue to increase. In that regard, his delegation supported the proposal made by the representative of Ghana.

15. It was important for regional and subregional seminars to be more widely held, particularly those related to the fields of international trade law, environmental law, copyright law and other issues which affected basic aspects of the conditions for the economic development of countries and their opportunities for participation in the internationalization of economies.

16. His delegation considered that the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, in cooperation with the Office of Communications and Media Services, should encourage the use of Internet data transmission technology as a means of transmitting information and documents, including treaties, by computer, thus permitting more widespread consultation of such information. His delegation also supported the establishment of the United Nations Audiovisual Library in International Law, and believed that the Secretariat should urge countries to furnish the information, such as reference materials, which the Library needed so that more concrete information could be transmitted to universities and law schools worldwide through the regional offices of the United Nations. In that way, a mechanism of cooperation which would include the participation not only of Governments, but also of jurists interested in the Programme, would be established.

Agenda Item 146: United Nations Decade Of International Law (*continued*) (A/C.6/52/L.12, L. 5 and L.4/Rev.1)

17. **The Chairman** drew attention to draft resolution A/C.6/52/L.12, the general draft resolution on agenda item 146 proposed by the Chairman of the Working Group on the United Nations Decade of International Law. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

18. *Draft resolution A/C.6/52/L.12 was adopted without a vote.*

19. **The Chairman** drew attention to draft resolution A/C.6/52/L.5, proposed by the Chairman of the United Nations Decade on International Law, on action to be taken dedicated to the 1999 centennial of the first International Peace Conference and to the closing of the United Nations Decade of International Law. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

20. *Draft resolution A/C.6/52/L.5 was adopted without a vote.*

21. **The Chairman** drew attention to draft resolution A/C.6/52/L.4/Rev.1, entitled "Draft guiding principles for international negotiations", which had been sponsored by 19 Member States.

22. **Mr. Hamdan** (Lebanon) said his delegation would have preferred the Chairman of the Working Group to have proposed that draft resolution as she had done with the previous ones. Moreover, his delegation wished to become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

23. **Mr. Enkhsaikhan** (Mongolia) introduced the draft resolution entitled "Draft guiding principles for international negotiations" (A/C.6/52/L.4/Rev.1) on behalf of the sponsors. The interesting exchange of views, in which over 40 delegations had taken part, had highlighted the importance of the issue. The comments and proposals, of both a substantive and a drafting nature, made by many delegations would help to improve the content of the draft principles. There was no hidden agenda behind the elaboration and adoption of the guiding principles. The initial caution of some delegations was understandable since the item was a new one and time was needed to consider it. His delegation emphasized once again that the draft made no attempt to restrict free choice in the peaceful settlement of disputes or to codify the rules of international negotiations, which was impossible both legally and politically. He hoped that those questions would be discussed at a later stage.

24. The preamble to the draft resolution stressed the role of international negotiations. In that regard, he referred to preambular paragraphs 5 and 6. The operative portion of the draft outlined the procedures to be followed for its further consideration. Thus, the item would be considered during the next session of the General Assembly under the agenda item "United Nations Decade of International Law", which was reasonable since the underlying motives for the elaboration of the guiding principles for international negotiation were in full harmony with the objectives of the Decade. That would also avoid the need to establish yet another mechanism for consideration of the sub-item. It was also logical for the Working Group to embark on substantive consideration of the draft guiding principles for international negotiations, contained in annex II of document A/52/141, after receiving the comments and proposals of the States and international organizations concerned. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

25. **Ms. Alvarez Nunez** (Cuba) said that her delegation wished to become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

26. **The Chairman** added Cuba and Lebanon to the list of sponsors of the draft resolution and said that if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt it without a vote.

27. *Draft resolution A/C.6/52/L.4/Rev.1 was adopted without a vote.*

28. **Mr. Fruchtbaum** (Solomon Islands) thanked the representative of Mongolia for introducing the draft resolution and for his delegation's flexibility in negotiations, and proposed that consideration should be given to combining the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the various resolutions associated with international negotiations in a document which would serve as a basis for future consideration of the guiding principles for international negotiations. It would be useful for the Working Group to have access to that document in considering the sub-item at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly.

29. **Mr. Karev** (Russian Federation) asked the Secretariat to bring to the attention of the appropriate services various problems with the Russian translation of the three draft resolutions just adopted.

30. **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat had taken note of the Russian Federation's request that the appropriate corrections should be made before the plenary meeting of the General Assembly. He then announced that the Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 146.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.